

toward the first of these is supposed to determine their attitude toward the succeeding. By robbing science of its dogmatism the rights of man to freedom are held to be substantiated. But freedom demands that history be capricious and that conduct be guided by a well-wrought ethical theory—Gunn *loquitur*. There thus come forward, like characters in a masque, the various theories of good conduct, from the aestheticism of Renan's later years to the *morale sans obligation ni sanction* of Guyau. But since ethics is restless without a foundation in religion, the problem of the universe as a stage for our acts is the final study of the book.

So slight an outline of Dr. Gunn's work but faintly adumbrates its structure. It must suffice, however, to indicate in what way the history of philosophy is here presented. It is surely a strong enough suggestion to justify some surprise at the sentence: "The foregoing pages have been devoted to a history of ideas rather than to the maintenance of any special thesis or particular argument" (p. 317). The foregoing pages are speedily seen to be the fruits of a very special thesis, not only about the importance of the problem of freedom, but also about the function of history writing. They treat the history of ideas as if it were the logical arrangement of their main presuppositions. They show a belief that the non-philosophic interests of the country have small influence upon the philosophic, and vice versa.

The last point mentioned is especially astonishing since, as Dr. Gunn says himself very well (p. 323), the French are the best-educated people in philosophy in the world. Philosophy is taught in their lycées; its topics form part of daily conversation.

The debates in the French Chamber last summer over Bérard's proposal for a return to the classics in education featured a week's argument on Kant. The magazines are crammed with allusions to philosophic points of view, and literature in that amazing country loses much of its force to one who does not understand its philosophic background. The French treat all their problems philosophically—that is, with critical analysis. Such men as Julien Benda, Sorel, Léon Daudet, Anatole France are typical of the French method of interpreting life. Surely they have some place in their country's philosophic history. The intimacy between very abstract reflection and concrete action is an eminent characteristic of French civilization and one of its greatest faults.

I feel that if Dr. Gunn had soaked himself in French life and letters—a request which it is highly inappropriate to make of a candidate for the Ph.D.—he would have cultivated his field more cautiously but more fruitfully. His critical sense would never have permitted him to link Coué of Nancy with Charcot, Ribot, Binet, and Pierre Janet (p. 49 n.), nor Buchez with Proudhon, omitting any mention of Ballanche (p. 175). He would have avoided the overstatement that outside of Roman Catholicism there is "no religious organization which is of much account" (p. 270), and the blunder of making the Vatican "choose to favor, or rather to follow" Joseph de Maistre (p. 272).

Again a deeper acquaintance with psychology would have eliminated the naive footnote to the effect that the church's strong appeal to women is due "to the supreme loveliness of motherhood" expressed in Mariolatry (p. 278). A wider reading of French philosophies before his period opens would have prevented the charge that Cousin's eclecticism was "a foreign growth on French soil, due to German influence" (p. 319). Finally he would have corrected the statement, let us hope, that at the time of Renouvier's "Essais de Critique Générale" (1854-1864) there prevailed in France an ignorance of Immanuel Kant.

These points and others could be cleared up, if Dr. Gunn wished, in a second edition of his study. A second edition will undoubtedly be called for, since his work is both full of information and timely. It would be too bad if it were not also accurate.

GEORGE BOAS

Americana

The United States: From the Discovery of the American Continent to the End of the World War. By William Henry Hudson and Irwin S. Guernsey. Frederick A. Stokes Company. \$5.

A History of Minnesota. Vol. I. By William Watts Folwell. The Minnesota Historical Society.

Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society (Vol. 55), 1921-22. Published by the Society (Boston).

THE volume by Hudson and Guernsey represents an attempt to cover the whole period of American development within the compass of a single volume of 632 pages. It appears as one of the volumes in the Great Nations Series. Mr. Hudson was by personal experience admirably equipped to interpret the history of the United States to the English-speaking world. Trained in England, and for years secretary to Herbert Spencer, he was later assistant librarian of Cornell University, lecturer at the University of Chicago, and professor of English literature at Stanford University. Mr. Hudson had planned to write the entire volume, but his death prevented the execution of the task beyond the chapter on the administration of John Adams. The book was completed from this point by Mr. Irwin S. Guernsey of the DeWitt Clinton High School in New York City.

While undoubtedly available as a college textbook on American history, the volume is quite obviously intended for the general reader, and is best adapted to his needs. In this respect it differs from the earlier works of Bassett and Elson. In its attitude toward the interpretation of our national evolution, the methodology and point of view are wholly conventional. The subject matter is overwhelmingly military, diplomatic, and political history, presented primarily from the episodic, rather than the institutional viewpoint. If compared with a recent book of somewhat similar pretensions, it departs widely from distribution of material and mode of interpretation which characterize the notable work of Professor W. M. West on "American Democracy." Professor Max Farrand's brief but vital volume interpreting the main phases and processes of American development, and Professor Schlesinger's brilliant achievement in summarizing the chief results of recent American scholarship in recasting the interpretation of the history of the United States have not affected the authors' orientation or the arrangement of the narrative.

One is forewarned not to expect familiarity with the latest positions in historical scholarship when he is informed on page 12 that the Turkish occupation of the Eastern trade-routes was the basic cause of the discovery of America. There is no clear indication of the important point, so emphasized by Professors Shepherd and Bolton, that the discovery and colonization of the United States was but an integral part of that great movement of European expansion overseas following 1492. The interpretation of the antecedents of the American Revolution is highly conventional. Mr. Hudson would satisfy even the better type of American municipal school committee in this regard. The summary scarcely reaches the level of the objective English writers on the subject, such as Lecky and Trevelyan, to say nothing of embodying the results of the researches of such men as Van Tyne, Schlesinger, Alvord, Fisher, Beer, Becker, and others. Even the Boston Tea Party remains undefined. The analysis of the background and the making of the Federal Constitution of 1787 is commonplace, episodic, and reverential. There is no hint that Beard and Libby have written on this subject. Professor Turner's emphasis on the place of the frontier and the section in American development has been very inadequately appropriated. The background of the Jacksonian democracy, so well presented by Simons and Schlesinger, is omitted. In treating the period since the Civil War astonishingly little space is given to that fundamental economic revolution which Beard and Lingley have so admirably interpreted. The duplicity and lack of nerve on the part of President Mc-

Kinley in the face of party pressure, which made possible the Spanish-American War, is not at all revealed. Finally, rather more space is given to the colonial period, and rather less to the development of the country since the Civil War, than would be approved by the more progressive writers on American history today. The book is interestingly written and admirably printed. Certain chapters, especially that on colonial society, possess high merit. One who desires a reliable and reasonably vivid conventional narrative of American history will not be disappointed with this volume; those who wish to gain some real insight into the growth of American society and culture will turn to West's "American Democracy."

The book by Dr. Folwell, formerly president of the University of Minnesota, is the first of a four-volume work in process of publication. It constitutes another promising contribution to that fruitful cultivation of Western history, begun by Professor Turner and his disciples a generation ago, and to that laudable interest in State history by others than antiquarians, which is now being forwarded by Professors C. W. Alvord, B. F. Shambaugh, D. R. Fox, and others. The present volume brings the material down to the eve of the Civil War, and is notable for attention to social, economic, and cultural, as well as political, forces in the growth of the State. Those interested in the history of the old Northwest will eagerly await the appearance of the remaining volumes. The editorship of Professor Solon J. Buck gives double assurance of accuracy and vitality in the narrative.

The latest volume of the "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society" is wholly in keeping with earlier issues in bringing together material primarily biographical, episodic, and antiquarian in nature. In this volume the most interesting and important material is contained in the estimates of James Bryce by Charles W. Eliot, A. Lawrence Lowell, and James Ford Rhodes, and the tribute to Professor Barrett Wendell by President Lowell. There are many entries of antiquarian interest.

HARRY ELMER BARNES

De Casseres, Anarch

The Shadow Eater. By Benjamin De Casseres. American Library Service. \$2.

NEARLY a score of years has passed since "The Shadow Eater" was first published and yet the author of these startling poems has remained practically unknown except in the journalistic milieu that he frequented. The critical scouts that should have been alert for the signs of new genius either ignored or were ignorant of the existence of Benjamin De Casseres. Remy de Gourmont and James Huneker pointed the way to his door, but their voices were lost in the rumble of drums that heralded the constant arrivals on the literary scene of magnificoes of little talent. The drums are still rumbling and genius still starves for the appreciation that should attend it. Now that "The Shadow Eater" has been republished after the lapse of a number of years I, who have lately read these poems for the first time, wonder if it be possible for De Casseres to receive his due from this generation. That a later one will hail him as a poet who spoke before his time I have no doubt, but today he is doomed to obscurity for reasons that are patent to any one who brings an understanding sympathy to the reading of his strange poems.

Their spirit is anarchical, but of an anarchy that transcends the breaking of the tablets of man's petty fashioning and would assault the enthroned Life Force itself. It beats savagely against the walls of its prison, not for freedom's sake, but because it would know—and destroy—that which lies beyond them. To those who serenely await a supernal answer to the great riddle as well as to those who anoint their uneasy souls with the unguent of philosophers or theologians the poetry of Benjamin De Casseres will always be anathema. No larks sing

their "God's-in-His-Heaven" songs in these pages. Daffodils may nod in sun-bright rows but De Casseres stands lost in contemplation before the gibbet that rises black and stark against the moon. The unearthly secret of life glows through these poems, but to the poet it lies hidden behind its blinding radiance. He grapples with that mystery of the spirit that pushed up cursing man from the primordial ooze and yet throughout the struggle he knows the futility of his soul-wearying efforts. But Caliban some day will stand before Prospero and of this meeting De Casseres sings.

The weird beauty of these chants of a soul that still feels the pangs of its own birth can not be limned in other words than those which it utters in its own proud torment. Lack of space prevents me from quoting in full the significant poem, *The Vision Malefic*.

"My soul is a tarn as black and motionless as the night above
In which whirl forever and ever the pallid balls of light that
are my sickly dreams.

I am weaving a shroud for the God whom I hate—
I have defied Him and cursed Him, and here is His winding-sheet.

I am lodged in my sins, and my soul is lean of its lusts."

These swift-running, rhymeless lines, with their varying yet certain rhythm, like the beat of the sea on a long, curving shore, made their appearance some time before the *vers libre* craze swept our smaller poets beyond their depth. This fact would be more significant had not Walt Whitman broken the set forms of poetry several generations behind De Casseres. Whitman's influence was not lost on De Casseres, but it betrays itself in the fashioning of some of his lines more than in their content.

The fierce individualism of De Casseres, however, makes it impossible for him to employ very long any medium that is not shaped by his own passion. For this reason he occupies a niche that is all his own and asks space to stand from no other man. Formal criticism would demand a label for that niche by which the poet could be read into his proper place in the ranks of his contemporaries and his predecessors, but De Casseres defies such evaluation, for he belongs to no school nor does he proselyte for any cult that is greater than his own individuality. His genius may owe much to those before him who strode in the vanguard of the rebels, yet it has come to its full flower only in himself. It is a bloom of exotic richness that time will not cause to droop and perish.

HOWARD IRVING YOUNG

A Depraved Spirit

Salome of the Tenements. By Anzia Yezierska. Boni and Liveright. \$2.

A FLAME—a leaping, scorching, searing flame—that is the impression scarred into the mind by "Salome of the Tenements." Sonya is young. She loves life. She yearns for the unattainable. One day she starts out in pursuit of it, and the story of that pursuit is the thread of the tale. Really, "Salome" is a misnomer. Sonya Vrunsky might be likened to many classic figures, but never to Salome.

She might, for example, be called the Père Grandet of the tenements as she presses her experience to her bosom, crying: "Mine, mine, mine only and forever!" Or she might be likened to Mr. Bounderby, exploiter and enslaver of men and women. Sonya is the miser and the monopolist—at heart a business-woman, not a vamp. Besides, the traditional Salome was a cat's-paw in the hands of Herodias, while Sonya is a devouring monster. She describes herself as "a soul consumed with hunger for heights beyond reach," but in seeking to scale those heights she does not hesitate to set her feet on the necks of her fellows, as when she destroys Lipkin's happiness, or begs her costume from Hollins, or lays the trap for Manning, her millionaire future husband, or buys her landlord without paying the